

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-35 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. In addition, new claims 36-41 will have been submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

In view of the herein contained amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection together with an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 19-22, 24-27 and 29-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by SHAPIRA (U.S. Patent No. 6,697,641). Claim 33 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over SHAPIRA in view of WEERACKODY (U.S. Patent No. 5,305,353). The Examiner indicated that claims 23, 28, 34 and 35 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner also indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the present Response and without in any way acquiescing in either of the rejections made by the Examiner, Applicants have, merely in order to advance the prosecution of the present application towards allowance, rewritten various of the objected to claims into independent form. Accordingly, at least in accordance with the Examiner's indication, all the claims pending in the present application should now be allowable. Accordingly, an action to such effect is respectfully requested in due course.

By the present Response, Applicants have submitted new claim 36 which is based upon previously pending claim 19 and objected to claim 23. Independent claim 40 is based upon previously pending claim 33 and objected to claim 34. Dependent claims 37, 38, 39 and 41 are based upon previously pending claims 20, 21, 22 and 35.

In rewriting these claims into independent form, Applicants have further revised the claim language to ensure clarity and conciseness as well as to enhance conformance with U.S. claim drafting procedures while not further limiting the claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections together with an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have, without acquiescing in the propriety of any of the outstanding rejections, rewritten several of the objected to claims into independent form. Accordingly, at least in accordance with the Examiner's indication, Applicants have provided a clear, evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all the claims pending in the present application.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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